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Title: State gives agriculture dollars for regional farmers market

Date: 06/21/2007

Source: [Messenger-Inquirer \(Owensboro\)](#)

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Lead:

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The state Agricultural Development Board and agriculture boards in Daviess and McLean counties are pooling their money to fund a farmers market that will carry Kentucky products from across the state.

The three boards put up over \$74,000 in state and county agriculture dollars to finance the indoor farm market, which will be built by Trunnell Farm Market. The money comes from the Agricultural Development Fund, which was created to help Kentucky farmers become less dependent on income from tobacco production.

The market will be built on U.S. 431 about six miles south of Home Depot in Daviess County. Kevin Trunnell said Monday the plan is to operate the market from April through December, by selling a variety of Kentucky grown products.

The planned facility is a substantial upgrade over the family's previous market space.

"We started in 1992 with a really small roadside stand, using a tobacco barn with a shed on it," Trunnell said. Last year, however, a wind storm destroyed the barn and shed, forcing the family to sell its fruits and vegetables out of a tent.

The new facility will have 1,000 feet of retail space, will be heated and cooled, and will have a commercial kitchen. Trunnell said the kitchen will allow workers to process vegetables, such as shucking corn for customers who want corn without having to shuck it themselves.

"We've gotten a lot of requests to shuck the sweet corn for the customers," Trunnell said. Being heated and cooled with cooler space "allows us to bring in products we couldn't bring in with an open-air market," he said.

In addition to fruit and vegetables, Trunnell said he plans to carry jams and jellies, flowers, dairy products and possibly meat and eggs, all produced by Kentucky growers.

"This is going to be a flag ship 'Kentucky Proud' store, where a customer would be able to find many products from around the state," Trunnell said. The "Kentucky Proud" program is an effort by the state agriculture department to promote the state's farm products to consumers.

Angela Blank, communications director for the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy, said the state Agricultural Development Board liked the idea of a farmer's market carrying products from across the state.

"When the board approved it, they were real excited about it," Blank said. "(Trunnell) is committed to bringing products from other counties."

The market "is one of those examples of a tobacco-dependent family diversifying to keep the family on the farm," Blank said.

Trunnell said he hopes to have the market built and ready to open by September. Until then, the family is selling its own farm products out of the tent they used last year.

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Generated Date: 7/26/2007 1:15:54 PM